**[Witness](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0090329/)** ([1985](http://www.imdb.com/Sections/Years/1985/))

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This is one of those movies whose virtues and subtleties become more and more apparent with subsequent viewings. The crime story is nothing more than a pretense - a "MacGuffin", in Hitchcock's phrase - on which to hang this sensitive and insightful story of the conflict between modernity and the culture of the Amish, which is portrayed here with admiring respect and not a hint of condescension.   
  
Harrison Ford's portrayal of John Book is perhaps his finest work on screen so far. In particular, Book's struggle to suppress his rising attraction for Rachel, and his tormented realization that a relationship between them is not possible, is achingly portrayed. Ford's effort is well-matched by Kelly McGillis, whose beauty here is almost breathtaking. The erotic interplay between them, because it is consummated, gives off an almost painful tension, and the easily lampooned "running through the field" scene - because it has been led up to so convincingly - is almost heartbreaking. The character of Eli Lapp, wonderfully played by Jan Rubes, is richly multifaceted. His suspicion of the "English" outsider and his anger at Rachel's attraction to him, is surmounted by an underlying humanity. His parting words to Book, "You be careful out there among them English," are moving testimony to his acceptance of him. His stern yet loving dialogue to his grandson about renouncing hatred and violence is a treasured moment.   
  
Both direction and cinematography are spendid. The simplicity of Amish interiors is shot in a way that makes its austerity almost beautiful, and the barnraising scene is an exercise in cinematic lyricism.  
  
It would be easy to fault the movie for the facile scene in which the punks taunting of Book's newfound friends and protectors drives him over the edge (Eli: "It's not our way, Book" Book: "No, bit it's MY way."), but his gift to the young thug of a bloody nose is mighty satisfying to behold.  
  
My one criticism is with the music; certainly not with the venerable Maurice Jarre's score itself, but with its paltry synthesized realization. They should have found the money to spring for a full orchestra.  
  
In short, a highly satisfying, richly themed, and multifacted film which is well worth watching.